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A Proclamation by Queen Elizabeth against the despisers, or Breakers of the Orders prescribed in the Book of Common prayer.

London, Richard Jugge 1573.

By the Queen:

A Proclamation against the Despisers or Breakers of the Orders prescribed in the Book of Common-prayer.

THe Queens Majesty being right sorry to understand that the order of Common-prayer, set forth by the common consent of the Realm, and by authority of Parliament, in the first year of her Reign, wherein is nothing contained but the Scripture of God, and that which is consonant unto it, is now of late of some men despised, and spoken against, both by open preachings, and writings, and of some bold and vain curious men, new and other Rites found out and frequented, whereupon contentions, sects and disquietness doth arise among her people: and for one godly and uniform order, diversity of Rites and Ceremonies, Disputations, and Contentions, Schisms and Divisions already risen, and more like to ensue. The cause of which disorders, her Majesty doth plainly understand to be the negligence of the Bishops and other Magistrates, who should cause the good Laws and Acts of Parliament made in this behalf to be better executed and not so dissembled and winked at, as hitherto (it may appear) that they have been.

For speedy remedy whereof, her Majesty straightly chargeth and commandeth all Archbishops and Bishops, and all Justices of Assises, and Oyer and Terminer, and all Mayors, head Officers of Cities and Towns Corporate, and all other who have any authority to put in execution the Act for the Uniformity of Common-prayer, and the Administration of the Sacraments made in the first year of her gracious Reign, withal diligence and severity, neither favouring nor dissembling with one person nor other, who doth neglect, despise, or seek to alter the godly Orders and Rites set forth in the said Book: But if any person shall by publick preaching, writing, or printing, contemn, despise, or dispraise the Orders contained in the said Book, they shall immediately apprehend him, and cause him to be imprisoned, until he hath answered to the Law, upon pain that the chief Officers, being present at any such preaching, and the whole Parish, do answer for their contempt and negligence. Likewise, if any shall forbear to come to the Common-prayer, and receive the Sacraments of the Church, according to the Order in the said Book allowed, upon no just and lawful cause: all such persons they shall enquire of, present, and see punished, and ordered according as is prescribed in the said Act, with more care and diligence than heretofore hath been done: the which negligence hath been cause why such disorders have of late now so much and in so many places encreased and grown.

And if any persons shall either in private houses, or in publick places

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make assemblies, and therein use other Rites of Common-prayer and Administration of the Sacraments than is prescribed in the said Book, or shall maintain in their houses any persons being notoriously charged by Books or Preachings to attempt the alteration of the said Orders, they shall see such persons punished with all severity, according to the Laws of this Realm, by pains appointed in the said Act.

And because these matters do principally appertain to the persons Ecclesiastical, and to the Ecclesiastical Government, her Majesty giveth a most special and earnest charge to all Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and Deans, and all such as have ordinary jurisdiction, in such cases to have a vigilant eye and care to the observation of the Orders and Rites in the said Book prescribed, throughout their Cures and Dioces, and to proceed from time to time by ordinary and Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as is granted them in the said Act, with all celerity and severity against all persons who shall offend against any of the Orders in the said Book prescribed, upon pain of her Majesties high displeasure, for their negligence, and deprivation from their Dignities and Benefices, or other Censures to follow, according to their demerits.

Given at *Greenwich* the 20 day of *October*, 1573. In the fifteenth year of the Queens Majesties Reign.

God save the Queen.

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